

## Judicial & Legal Stakeholders: Supporting In-Home Planning

Child welfare systems, including child protective services and community-based youth justice, and legal partners have long had to balance the harm of removing a child and the potential risk of a child remaining in-home.

Research makes clear that child welfare systems have a significant responsibility to support children, youth, and families remaining safely together.<sup>1</sup>

DCF and local child welfare agencies have increased supports to keep children safely in-home as part of Putting Families First. This has included a renewed commitment to:

- Creative efforts to keep children in-home & prevent removals
- Increased partnership with a family's extended support network
- Renewed emphasis on partnering with community supports

### Legal Partners can support in-home planning in several critical ways:



#### Hearing from Parents

Legal partners have a key role in helping families navigate the system. Hearing directly from parents about what they need to be successful is vital to in-home planning. Ensure parents understand what is needed from them at key points of the case.



#### Partner With Your Local Child Welfare Agency

Ask your local partners what ways they are implementing efforts to keep more children safely in-home!



#### Ask Key Questions

Asking key questions during court proceedings has been found to help decrease removals and increase relative placements.

<sup>1</sup> Capacity Building Center for States. (2021). *The evidence for strengthening families*. Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Service. <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/resources/evidence-strengthening-families>. PDF download.

For more information on Putting Families First:  
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first>.

## Key questions to support in-home planning may include:



- What does the family think is needed to be successful in home?
- What can be done to remove the safety concern instead of the child?
- Can someone the child knows move into the home to support the family?
- Can the caregiver and the child move together to a relative's home?
- Can public safety threats be reduced by matching services with delinquency-related needs?
- What are you seeing in the home that makes you think this plan will be successful?
- What ensures monitoring/accountability of this plan?
- If the child has been removed, what is the path for this child to go home?

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